DIAMONDS.

What they Are, Where they Come From and Who Own Them-White, Black, Green, and Blue Diamonds-Peculiar Bistories of Ancient and Modern Gems Peerless Purity versus Parishable Paste-How Diamonds are Valued-The Diamond Mines of Golconda and Brazil -Robiner, the Mountain of Light-The Lesser Brilliants of our Ball-rooms and Parlers-A Glance into the Realms of Fashion.

The diamond is a crystallized gem, of all jewels the most esteemed. Physically considered, it is the hardest of all known substances. It cuts everything, and can be cut by nothing save itself or its own dust.

The external coat of the diamond is said to be harder than the internal; the hardness of the latter being rated at 10, and the former at 10.5 or 11. The specific gravity of the Brazilian diamond is estimated at 3.444; of the Brazilian yellow at 3.519; of the Oriental, 3.521; Oriental green, 3.524; Oriental blue, 3.525. The crystal of the diamond is octahedral in form, resembling two four-sided pyra-mids joined at the base. The crystal has cleavage planes which facilitate its cutting. Some varieties of the regular crystalline form have been observed approaching to the spherieal, with curved edges, etc.

The diamond is not acted upon by acids or alkalies. It can, however, be acted upon by heat. It can be destroyed by a Bunsen' battery or a condensed mixture of carbonic exide and oxygen, resolved into a sort of coke and sublimed. In the air it burns at about the degree of heat necessary to melt silver, and gives off carbonic gas. At first there were some doubts as to the inflammability of the diamond. Newton, however, from its great refractive power, inferred its combustibility. In the year 1695 it was burnt at Florence by a powerful concentration of the solar rays. Sir Humphrey Davy, the French savant Lavoisier, and others, also proved its combustibility.

The phosphorescence of the diamond has also been asserted, though, we believe, never absolutely ascertained. Tiffany & Co. some years ago made some experiments on this subject, but only succeeded in destroying their diamonds. The diamond is one of the most powerful refractors of light known. It possesses single (and by some supposed to possess double) refraction. It is to this quality that the superior brilliancy of the gem is due while, as it is so hard, it likewise retains its lustre. When rubbed it becomes electrical, and attracts straw and hair-a property which it is said, no other uncut gem possesses. The diamond shines more brilliantly by artificial than by natural light. It can be readily broken. The most singular fact about the diamond is, perhaps, its chemical composition, which is simply that of crystallized carbon or coal, just as the ruby is mere crystallized clay. The most beautiful, it is also the most simple of substances, and closely allied to the most unattractive. What is still more singular, though the diamond can be resolved into carbon, carbon cannot be resolved into the diamond. Mons. Despretz, Professors Hare and Silliman, and many other learned men, have attempted this latter feat, but have all been unsuccessful, which is a very lucky thing for the owners of diamonds, or else their pro perty would soon be comparatively valueless. VARIETIES.

Diamonds are generally colorless or white but there are many colored diamonds. The mon-colored gems are called of the "first water," from their resemblance to a mass of spring water, and are the most highly esteemed. Then there are the rose-colored diamonds, which are high in value; then the green diamond, and then the blue. The yellow or cinnamon-colored diamonds are not so much in demand as those varieties just mentioned. There are also diamonds which, mough pure, are perfectly black. Diamond. are also technically divided into three classes, determined by their cutting and setting, as the brilliant or Mazarine, the rose, and the table. These will be described more fully hereafter.

The earliest diamonds were found in Asia-Borneo, Bengal, and Golconda, in Hindostan. Within a comparatively recent period they have been derived from Brazil. They have also been found in Siberia, and to a very small degree in Georgia and North Carolina. Diamonds are often found along with gold in alluvial deposits. In Golconda the diamonds, it is said, were found in a black, coaly earth. The Itacolumite, a yellow and white quartz-rock, is often met in conjunction with diamonds, The Golconda mines are no longer in operation. In Brazil, the diamond district is a very mountainous region, about fifty miles long by twenty-four miles wide, and known as the Cerro do Frio. The earth obtained from the beds of rivers is carefully washed by slaves, under the direction of overseers, and then thoroughly examined and depleted of its treasures; all smuggling being severely punished-though every slave who finds a diamond exceeding 174 carats is immediately set free. The diamonds of Brazil were discovered by accident, and the diamands themselves were thought to be mere trifles. On official examination they were only deemed to be crystals, and it was reserved for a Dutchman to ascertain their real value. This, however, being once de cided, the Government was seized with a fit of rapacity, took possession of the whole region, and for a long while the diamond district of Brazil was a terra ignota to all save the slaves and the Government agents; but in course of time this mysteriously severe policy has been relaxed.

THE DIAMOND AS AN ORNAMENT.

As "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," the diamond has been prized from the earliest ages and in all lands. In the far-off times, in the "barbarous" East, diamonds and gems were the favorite adornment and insignia of princes; and in later periods, among the masters of the world, the Romans, who far excelled in their luxury all modern splendor, gems and diamonds were appreciated to the atmost. The hall where Cleopatra entertained Cæsar was literally respelendent with jewels as was the lady herself. The very furniture of the patricians was adorned with jewels; jewels sparkled in the sterns of ships; precious gems were worn on the sandals of the fair dames; while some of the noble ladies, it is narrated, even carried their diamonds with them to their beds, that they might enjoy in their very sleep the consciousness of the possession of rare and lovely treasures. Jewels amounting to over \$1,500,000 were worn at one time by Lollia Paulina, the daughter of a Senator. Lady Faustina's ring cost \$200,000; the Lady Domitia's ring \$300,000, while the diadem of Sabina was worth \$1,250, 000. Cæsar, thinking to put a check upon extravagance, passed an edict forbidding unmarried women to wear jewels, but the only effect of this law was to put an end at once to celibacy, every young Roman woman immediately imploring the aid of Hymen, and marry ing the first man she could find, for the sake of an establishment; deeming her husband, under the circumstances, as indeed "a jewel of a man."

In after ages, jewels were still remembered. Charles, Duke of Burgundy, was a connoisseur in diamonds. Francis I worshipped them. Henry VIII affected them. Queen Elizabeth of England was ravenously fond of them; so fond of them that she stole all the jewels of poor Mary of Scotland, and never gave any ompensation for them save taking the head of their beautiful but most unfortunate owner. The Spanish Kings were likewise addicted to diamonds; while in France, under the rule of Henry IV, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, and Louis XV, to be jewelless was to be worthless.

The story of the Diamond Necklace is too well known to require repetition; but there is a diamond tragedy associated with the memory of the beautiful Mad'lle Carlier, heiress of Carlier, a French bookseller of the time, which merits a brief record. A Monsieur Tiquet sent to the young lady a bouquet, in which diamonds and flowers intermingled in beautiful display. This gift, so suggestive of wealth, won the young heiress at once-and she became Madame Tiquet only to find herself the wife of an adventurer, who had used all his means and credit to purchase the diamond bouquet which he had thus used as a decoy to win her hand and her fortune. She resented the deception and separated from him. He tried the power of a lettre de cachet, but she tore it up before his face. At last, one night, Monsieur Tiquet was found weltering in his wounds. He did not die, however, and immediately accused his wife of an attempt to murder him, of which charge she was found guilty and suffered the fatal penalty-a penalty which of the two he by far the more richly

In our own times the diamond still preserves its supremacy alike over the eyes and the purses of humanity; and princes, men of rank, and almost all rich men are to be found among its envied and envious possessors.

THE GREAT DIAMONDS.

There are seven diamonds in existence of such great size, purity, and value as to deserve the title of paragon. These seven we will briefly describe:

1. The Regent Diamond; obtained from India by Mr. Pitt, Governor of Madras. Before cutting it weighed 410 carats. After cutting (which operation consumed two years) is weighed 136 carats. It was subsequently purby the Regent Due d'Orleans for a sum equal to \$675,000. Its worth is now estimated at over a million. It is in the possession of the Crown of France. Its length is 1:2437 inches; breadth, 1.177; depth, .359; and weight in Troy grains, 434.

2. Star of the South; found in Brazil, and taken to France. Weighs 2544 carats. 3. Portuguese Diamond; a Brazilian. Weighs in the rough, 1680 carats; worth an immense fortune, if genuine, which is doubted. It is

said to be only a fine white topaz. 4. The Kohinoor (Mountain of Light); obtained from the mines of Golconda over two thousand years ago-having an eventful and romantic history; becoming part of the re-nowned treasures of Delhi; then passing into the hands of Nadir Shah; and at last, by treaty, falling into the possession of the Crown of England. Its original weight was 186 carats. The last cutting took place at a comparatively recent date, a steam engine being made for the purpose, and the Duke of Wellington commencing in person the operation. It has been placed on public exhibition.

5. The Sultan of Matan. This diamond, obtained from Borneo, is of remarkable size and purity. Its weight is 367 carats; its value \$3,500,000. It is shaped like an egg, with a dent at one end.

6. The Orleff diamond, belonging to the crown of Russia. Weighs 195 carats, and is about the size of a pigeon's egg. It was originally stolen from an Eastern idol, and was ultimately sold by a Greek merchant to Queen Catherine.

7. The Austrian diamond, or diamond of the Grand Duke of Tuscany is of lemon color, and is cut in rose. It weighs 139 carats. It was originally purchased for a trifle. Its color and cut militate somewhat against its value. It is worth only \$500,000, instead of double that

There are also six diamonds, which, though smaller than those just described, are yet of great value, and have become celebrated.

1. The Shah of Persia, weighing 86 3-46 carats, of singular shape, and covered with inscriptions. Belonging at present to the crown of Russia.

2. The Sancy, weighing 53\(\frac{1}{2}\) carats. The Nassack, weighing 89 carats.

 The Arcott brilliants, weighing 56 carats. 5. The Pigott diamond, weighing 49 carats. This gem has passed through a variety of adventures, has been disposed of at a lottery, and is now in the possession of the Viceroy of

The blue diamond of a triangular shape. This once belonged to the French crown jewels, but of late years it has mysteriously disappeared—it was stolen and never found. In addition to the above list, we may mention that the diamonds belonging to the royal families of Portugal, Spain, and Brazil are of remarkable brilliancy and value. The King of Saxony possesses a superb green diamond. Mr. Hope, of England, has given his name to a magnificent shlue diamond. Many antique gems, engraved with the peculiar art of the ancients-a skill which far surpasses all modern attempts in this line-are in the possession of wealthy connoisseurs, especially on the continent. The Duke of Bedford possesses some valuable gems of this kind. are informed that Mrs. Belmont and other of our republican noblesse are similarly favored. Mr. Joseph Meyer, Mr. James Moore, and Mrs. Jarvis, of this city, are the owners of valuable and rare black diamonds.

The Polar Star, a brilliant diamond, belongs to the Russian Princess Yougsoupoff, and weighs forty carats. The Prince Esterhazy has a diamond valued at twelve millions of francs. The Holland diamond weighs 36 carats, and is valued at 260,000 francs. Prince Rioria, of Naples, owns a fine rose diamond, 15 carats. A Mr. Halpher owns a very pure diamond of 22½ carats. The Nizam is a very fine Eastern diamond—weighs 340 carats. The Sultan of Turkey has two very fine diamonds.

DIAMOND ROBBERIES. The value of the diamond has often caused t to be an object of unlawful cupidity, though its rarity has rendered it a difficult article for a thief to dispose of. There were four celebrated diamond robberies between the years 1792 and 1831. The first of these was the robbery of the crown jewels of France from the Garde Meuble, where they were deposited. This was a very mysterious affair, and has never been satisfactorily explained. Some of the jewels were recovered; a few of the parties were arrested; but the cloud has never been wholly dispelled. In the year 1801, about \$100,000 worth of jewels were stolen from the Princess of Santa Croce by her dependants and some adventurers. In 1829, Mad'lla. Mars, the celebrated French actress, was robbed of her jewels. She published a list of the stolen reasures forthwith. The catalogue, embracing forty-four different gems, diamond necklace, combs, bracelets, crosses, etc., were all well known to the public, as she was in the

was also robbed of her diamonds by friends this affair has, however, long since been hushed up. In more recent times, diamond robberies have not ceased. London was agitated, not long ago, by a peculiar robbery of this kind, and in New York we have had not a few cases. A well-known bank-note engraver of this

city was recently waited upon by two men, apparently gentlemen, with one of whom he was slightly acquainted. They produced for his inspection some diamonds, and requested a loan of several thousands of dollars upon their security. The engraver accompanied his visitors to Tiffany's, where the diamonds were pronounced genuine, and the loan was accordingly negotiated. In a few days the parties returned and redeemed the diamonds. A short time afterwards, the parties again visited the engraver; and producing a much larger and apparently more valuable assortment of diamonds, among which were the identical jewels on which the former loan had been made, requested a second loan, much greater in amount, though still amply warranted by the market value of the gems offered. Confldence by this time having been established, the proposition was at once, without further examination, acceded to. The money was loaned, and the borrowers departed, and have not since been seen. The diamonds offered have been found to be only capital paste, part of them excellent imitations of the diamonds first offered.

A fashionable personage, known in avenue droles as "The Count," was some years ago liscovered to be nothing more nor less than a diamend thief, having dishonestly obtained ossession of the jewels of a leading belle. The matter was hushed up, however, but the Count departed to less aristocratic localities. Mr. John Anderson, the retired tobacco lealer and the eminent philanthropist, was

recently the victim of a diamond swindle. Albert Burtis, the burglar, was accustomed to sport once on a time in this city a diamond worth \$12,000, which he is said to have stolen from the person of an Englishman travelling abroad; and in this connection it may be remarked that many of the professional thieves of New York are to be reckoned among the owners, or at least the holders, of diamonds.

DIAMONDS AS AN INVESTMENT.

At the present day, in this age of calculaion and in this land of calculators, diamonds are valued not only as an ornament but as an investment. This branch of the subject leads to various reflections entirely independent of history, romance, or beauty, but involves matter-of-fact details. As an investment diamonds have the great objection of being incapable of bearing interest; but on the other hand they are independent (comparatively) of the fluctuations of trade, of the price of gold, etc.; they have fixed standards (as far as possible) of genuine value, and they are very portable, easily transported from place to place. Besides (which in these times is a great consideration), diamonds are comparatively free from tax-paying no tax either to the State or Government, saving under the general head of personal property, and a duty of ten per cent. to the Government. All these facts being taken into consideration, it would seem that our wealthy citizens are not so "extravagant" as would at first appear in their outlay in diamonds.

THE DIAMOND BUSINESS.

The United States is one of the very best modern markets for the sale of diamonds, and as such is rapidly attracting the attention of the diamond-producing countries. Many of the diamonds sent to this country are old family jewels, with histories attached, once the property of the noblemen of Portugal, Spain, France, and England.

The trade in diamonds, like all others, has fluctuations; but as a rule it is more equable than the majority of commercial branches. The Indian diamonds have been crowded out of the market, as it were, to a certain extent, by the Brazilian; and these, in course of time, may yield to gems discovered in other localities. In fact, it is estimated by many thoroughly versed in the matter that the earth is full of diamonds, and that some day the supply will probably exceed the demand. At the present time, however, the case is exactly the reverse. The yield of Brazil for many years averaged three thousand six hundred carats per annum. The number of dealers in diamonds in New York will reach from eighty to one hundred. The value of diamonds in the United States will reach \$10,0000,000—of which at least \$60,000,000 is to be found in New York city alone. Diamonds are said to be appraised ten per cent. higher in this country than they are abroad. This estimate, however, is being diminished.

HOW DIAMONDS ARE VALUED. The first item in determining the value of a diamond is its color, according to the state ments published in the opening portion of this article The next consideration is the manner in which it is set or cut. The cutting of the diamond is a very important element. When taken out of the mine the diamond is ofttimes merely a dull-looking stone, appearing to be coated with gum-arabic; but when polished and cut, it is of all stones the most brilliant. Cutting, of course, diminishes the weight and size of a diamond, but increases the brilliancy of its surface, and therefore really enhance its value. In former times the diamond-cutters wasted more than half the diamond in performing their work; but at the present time they are more skilful and more careful, and the loss is comparatively less, averaging from forty to fifty per cent. The "spread' a gem, or the proportion of its breadth to its depth, is another item to be carefully considered.

HOW DIAMONDS ARE CUT AND POLISHED.

The art of cutting and polishing the diamond was known in early times throughout Asia, but was not familiar to the Europeans. It was introduced among the latter by a workman of Bruges, who, in the year 1476, discovered by accident that by rubbing two diamonds together their surfaces were abraded. It was also ascertained that the diamond could be polished by being rubbed with its own powder. The majority of diamonds are cut and polished in Amsterdam, though some large stones have been prepared in London. The cutting of a diamond is a tedious operation, requiring great time and patience. It is done almost wholly by hand. The process is as follows:-Two diamonds are used, attached to handles. A leaden model of the diamond to be cut is taken as a guide. The stones are then rubbed smartly together, and the dust or powder is collected in a metal box. This dust is mixed with vegetable oil, and is used to polish the gem, upon a revolving cast iron disk. The cutting is done by means of a steel wire covered with diamond dust, or sometimes by a chi-land hammer, though in the latter case g re must be taken lest the gem be broken. The cleavageplanes assist materially in the cutting. The diamend may be cut or set in three forms, called the brilliant, the rose, and the table. The brilliant is the form most preferred, though it wastes the most material, as it develops the habit of wearing them during her theatrical | brilliancy of the diamond to the greatest de-

the name collet is given to a small plane at the bottom. The top is styled the crown; the facets are triangular spaces and faces; the table s a plane on top; then there are guides, ribs, ozenges, pavilions, etc.

The brilliant is composed of a face or table, currounded by facets, which is all that is risible above the bezel when set. The stone n depth below the bezel should equal half its breadth. On the under side it terminates in a small table, connected with the upper surface by elongated facets.

The rose is flat below, and cut with facets ver the upper surface -- a sort of half polyhedron resting on the plane. It is a pretty

The table is an appropriate form for thin stones with large surfaces. It is out at the edges into facets.

The lasques are flat stones. TESTS.

In the trade it often happens that colorless opazes, emeralds, sapphires, and white zir-ons are palmed off for diamonds. It is often matter of great difficulty to detect a real liamond from another stone, or from an imitation. There are various tests for the diamond. Thus the diamond will merely refract rays of light which will pass through other ems. Electric tests can be instituted between liamonds and other stones. The specific gravity of the diamond is another test. ts color. The peculiar brilliancy of the diamond when cut is another excellent test; but we would advise all who desire to purchase I amonds to visit the experts connected with the leading jewelry-houses, who make diamonds a study, and who claim that, having once seen a diamond, they never forget it, and can always reognize it, no matter what changes may have taken place in the cutting or setting. often exist in genuine diamonds, and these flaws are not seldom difficult to discover. To detect a flaw, breathe on the surface of the stone. This will dimish the lustre of the gem. and the flaw will be rendered apparent. monds "off color," as they are termed, are very faulty, though very common, sometimes one half the stone is genuine, the other half being an imitation. These "doublets" or 'semi-stones' are common and very deceitful. Sometimes colored matter is placed in the set-ting, to give the desired hue to the gem.

STANDARD OF VALUE. There is an arbitrary rule, which has been extensively followed, to determine the value of a diamond. The gem is measured by carats (equaling four grains), these grains differing, however, from Troy grains, five of the one equalling four of the other—and the rule is, nultiply the square of the weight in carat by certain sums, varying according to the stone its manner of cutting, etc. The rule now seems to be, if a diamond of 1 carat is worth \$100, a two-carat diamond will be worth 2x2 times that sum, or \$400; a three-carat 3x3 that sum, or \$900, and so on. This rule applies, however, only semi-occasionally. With all the really valuable gems, the universal custom is for the seller to ask as much as he thinks the buyer will by any possibility pay. After all, diamonds, like other commodities, regulate themselves. Large gems are more valuable in proportion than small ones; but, on the other hand, small gems are by far the most likely to find purchasers. The carat is divided into sixty-four parts, so as to express all lhe variations of weight, which, in so precious a substance as the diamond, are matters of great moment.

In the United States, before the war, the following table was published of the value of

One-carat stone .. .\$85 to \$100 Melle or mixed stone...... Four-carat stone900 to 1000 But these prices have been greatly increased of late years; and the general rule of value seems to be to ask whatever one is likely to

All sorts of prices have been paid for diamonds. Some time since, a stone of 61 carats sold for £33,000, while a larger stone has sold for less. Different prices have been asked and paid for the same stone at different periods; but, as a rule, though the exact market price of a diamond may vary, yet it always has a certain ratio of genuine value.

Diamonds, too, are affected in value by their history and associations. In a catalogue of a recent collection, we observed the following:-1. Drop-shaped brilliants, 49 grains, formerly belonging to Louis XVI.

2. Brilliant drops, 1001 grains, formerly belonging to Marie Antoinette. 3. Rose diamonds, 63 grains, formerly belonging to Sultan Selim.

 Brilliant drops, 100 grains, formerly belonging to Joseph Bonaparte. Who will deny that the value of gems thus historically associated with terrible memories is vastly in excess of their mere worth as single stones !

MISCELLANEOUS USES.

Dismonds have a commercial and utilitarian value outside of their character as jewels. The rougher varieties of diamonds are used for miscellaneous purposes, and are called by the technical term "tort." Diamond-powder is extensively employed by lapidaries and gem-engravers: also, for etching-points. The point of a diamond is used by glaziers for the cutting of glass. Only the point of a natural crystal can be used for this purpose. IMITATIONS.

The enormous value of the diamond has, of course, stimulated attempts to imitate it, and these attempts are oftentimes very successful. The French have been especially successful in this line. Mons. Bourquignon has become celebrated as a manufacturer of imitation diamonds. He obtained his sand from Fontaineleau. Set in gold, these imitations look ab colutely as magnificent as the gennine gem. They, however, lose hardness and grow dull in time. The material used for imitating diamonds is a composition known as strass—a white glass-like stuff, embracing sand, potash, borax, red-lead, and arsenic. The Germans are said to be successful in the manufacture of imitations. There are also stones that are occasionally mistaken for diamonds, known as Cape May and California diamends. Many imitations have been introduced into the American market, and it requires some experience to discriminate between the true and

the false in gems. PLEDGING DIAMONDS. "Pawnbrokers are the best judges of diamonds." So said a friend in our hearing the other day, and doubtless there was much truth in this remark. Many diamonds fall into their possession (at least temporarily) during the year. The diamond is such a "convenient" article, a "pledge" so portable and so valuable that its suitability in this respect has often been tested by its owners. There are brokers, too, who make loaning upon diamonds one of their specialties. when they experience a run of ill-luck, find the diamond a good friend in need wherewith

performances. The jewels were afterwards | gree. The brilliant is cut in the shape of two | to raise the wind, and many of our rich recovered, and the thieves, her own servants, punished. In 1831, the Princess of Orange | the upper sides and corners are called bezel | truth verified in their experience during Wall street fluctuations. We have a friend who possesses a diamond ring valued at \$1500. This ring, like Bella in the "Mutual Friend," is subject to a series of "disappearances, which are always accompanied by the presence of a large amount of greenbacks and a tendency to a violation of the Excise law. When the ring is on the finger again, the owner is sober, and not "flush" -a changed man, in fact, till his ring disappears again. And these phenomena are presented every few months at the least.

A large portion of the business of the leading jewellers of this city lies in the receiving of diamonds from their owners on deposit, the owners paying a certain price per month or year for their storage and protection. Diamonds are also loaned to great parties on great occasions. We see them awhile in the ossession of private parties, and then again behold them in the jeweller's case.

[In our issue of To morrow we will give an extensive List of the Principal Diamonds and their wearers residing in New York and Brooklyn,]

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